progress. The progress of earth work on main canal in the first 19 km reach is almost complete.

2. Financial Progress

Years	Outlays (Rs. in crore)	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)	
1993-94	161.24	426.73	(Cumulative up to March, 1994)
1994-95	153.31	126.33	
1995-96	129.11	96.78	

STATEMENT-II

As per Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal Award, the allocation of Narmada Water among the party States is as under :-

Madhya Pradesh	18.25 Million Acre Feet
Gujarat	9.00 Million Acre Feet
Rajasthan	0.50 Million Acre Feet
Maharashtra	0.25 Million Acre Feet
Total	28.00 Million Acre Feet

The validity period of the Award is upto 2024 A D (45 years after Gazette Notification in 1979).

Urban Land Ceiling Act, 1976

*73 SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any suggestion for amending the Urban Land Ceiling Act, 1976 are pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) the time by which these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The thrust of the suggestions from various States, organisations and the National Commission on Urbanisation relates to streamlining and simplification of procedures with a focus on guided development and added availability of land for shelter provision for the weaker sections.

(c) It would be difficult to give a definite time frame because as per the Constitutional requirements, after the approval by the Government, the Legislatures of at least two States where the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 is applicable have to concur and pass resolution under Article 252(2) of the Constitution to enable the introduction of the bill on the floor of Parliament

[English]

Relations Among SAARC Countries

*74. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI . Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps proposed to be taken to strengthen the relations among the SAARC countries; and

(b) the measures proposed to be taken by the Government to promote SAPTA into South Asian Free Trade Area (SAPTA)?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K GUJRAL) . (a) and (b) The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has emerged as the primary vehicle for facilitating mutually rewarding interaction among SAARC Member States on a wide range of issues of common interest to member countries in the economic, technical and social areas. India currently holds chairmanship of SAARC and is committed to playing an active role in advancing the areas of cooperation among Member States. Under India's chairmanship, SAARC Member States have already adopted the decision to strive to attain a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by the year 2000 but before the year 2005 The first meeting of SAARC Ministers of Commerce and the first SAARC Trade Fair were also held in New Delhi A wide ranging programme of observing the 10th Anniversary of SAARC has been agreed upon by Member States at the last council of Ministers meeting in New Delhi. Meetings of the Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries and of the Committee of Economic Cooperation of Commerce Secrearies, which advanced cooperation, have also been held These Committees and the Council of Ministers are meeting again later in the year It will be India's endeavour to enlarge the canvas of cooperation in these meetings as well as through other initiatives, some of which have been discussed with the Secretary General of SAARC, who visited India in June 95 as a guest of the Government of India and called on Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs and Finance Minister, apart from senior officials India attaches the highest importance to realising the full potential of SAARC in enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation within the region.

2. The agreement on the SAARC Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAFTA) became operational with effect from December 7, 1995. The first round of tariff reductions covering 226 products has already